

York University
Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies
Department of Economics
Fall 2026

Course # and Title

AP/ECON 3249 A Labour Economics: Theory

Course Webpage

<https://eclass.yorku.ca/>

Course Instructor/Contact

Name: Laura Salisbury
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Office Hours: R: 9:30-11:30
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Lecture Time and Location

Time: T 11:30-2:30
Location: HNE 037

Prerequisite / Co-requisite

Prerequisites: AP/ECON 1000 3.00 and AP/ECON 1010 3.00 or equivalents. Course credit exclusions: AP/ECON 3240 3.00, GL/ECON 3540 3.00.

Course Description

Applies economic theory to labour markets. Topics include labour force participation, demand for and supply of labour, the effects of market structure on wages and employment, investment in education and training, worker mobility, theories of discrimination in the labour market, and unemployment.

Weighting of Course

Course grades will be based on a writing assignment, a midterm exam and a final exam. Your grade will be calculated as the **greater** of the following: (1) 4 in-class writing assignments worth 10% each, midterm exam worth 20%, final exam worth 40%; (2) 4 in-class writing assignments worth 10% each, final exam worth 60%. The midterm will be held on **November 3rd** during class time. The date of the final exam is TBD.

Missed exams/Tests

There is no make-up offered for the midterm exam. If a student misses the midterm, that student's final exam will count for 60% of the final grade. A deferral for the final exam will be granted **only for medical reasons**. In such cases students should submit a deferred exam application together with the supporting documents (attending physician's statement) to the economics department to my attention. The date and time of the deferred exam will be set at a later date. Students who may require further extensions or accommodation will have to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

Deferred final exams must be requested using the following form:

<https://www.yorku.ca/laps/econ/undergraduate-programs/academic-resources/department-policies/deferred-standing/>

Writing Assignments

Writing assignments are collectively worth 40% of your final grade. **All writing assignments will be completed in class.** They will occupy the final 30 minutes of class time on the dates indicated on the syllabus.

Think of these as exercises in logical reasoning and critical thinking. Writing will be done on pen and paper without the aid of devices. For at least one of these exercises, you will be asked to comment on the work of one of your classmates. So, please write with the expectation that your work may be read by a peer, and not just by me.

Missed Assignments

All four writing assignments are done in class. **Please do not miss these classes.** For anyone who misses an assignment due to legitimate, extenuating circumstances, I will offer **ONE** make-up session near the end of the semester (date/time/location TBD).

Grading

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.) I reserve the right to make adjustments to this grading scheme if necessary.

Course Text / Readings

The text for the course is **Benjamin, Gunderson, Lemieux, and Riddell, *Labour Market Economics*, 9th edition** (\$165 on Amazon.ca; used, electronic, and past editions are fine). Secondary readings are listed in the course schedule below and will be linked from the course website.

Problem Sets

Problem sets will be posted on the course website. These problem sets will not be graded; however, you are very strongly encouraged to work through them. They are intended to be practice for the midterms and final exam.

Important Course Information for Students

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Curriculum & Academic Standards webpage;

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/index-policies.html/>

- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

Course Outline and Approximate Schedule

Dates	Topics	Supplementary Reading
Sept 15	Introduction	BGLR ch 1
Sept 22	Labour Supply – basic theory	BGLR ch 2
Sept 29	Labour Supply -- applications - public policy - labour supply over the life cycle	BGLR ch 3 & 4 Papers: - Eissa, N and JB Liebman (1996), "Labor Supply Response to the Earned Income Tax Credit," <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i>, 111(2): 605-637 - Goldin, C and L Katz (2002), "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions," <i>Journal of Political Economy</i>, 110(4): 730-770
Oct 6	Labour Demand First writing assignment	BGLR ch 5
Oct 13	Reading Week No Class	
Oct 20	Equilibrium in the Labour Market - competitive markets - monopoly & monopsony	BGLR ch 7 Paper: - Card, D and A Krueger (1994), "Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast-Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania," <i>American Economic Review</i>, 84(4): 772-793
Oct 27	Human Capital Second writing assignment	BGLR ch 9
Nov 3	Midterm	
Nov 10	Human Capital -- empirical challenges and applications	Papers: - Ashenfelter, O and A Krueger (1994), "Estimates of the Economic Return to Schooling from a New Sample of Twins," <i>American Economic Review</i>, 84(5): 1157-1173 - Angrist, J and A Krueger (1991), "Does Compulsory School Attendance Affect Schooling and Earnings?" <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i>, 106(4): 979-1014
Nov 17	Economics of Immigration Third writing assignment	BGLR ch 11 Paper: - Card, D (1990), "The Impact of the Mariel Boatlift on the Miami Labor Market," <i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review</i>, 43(2): 245-257
Nov 24	Race and Gender in the Labour Market	BGLR ch 12
Dec 1	Race and Gender in the Labour Market (cont'd) Fourth writing assignment	Paper: - Bertrand, M and S Mullainathan (2004), "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination," <i>American Economic Review</i>, 94(4): 991-1013
Dec 8	Final Exam review	